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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CHISINAU 000305

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/UMB

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TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM KDEM RO MD

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR RAISES TORTURE CONCERNS WITH PRIME MINISTER; PRISON ACCESS OFFERED - April 14

Classified by: Ambassador Asif J. Chaudhry for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

REF: Chisinau 296

¶11. (C) Summary: In an April 14 meeting Ambassador Chaudhry raised his concerns with Prime Minister Greceanii about the reports of harsh treatment of those participants in the April 7 demonstrations who had been arrested. The Ambassador stressed USG abhorrence of violence and underlined that any such acts had to stop. Although the Prime Minister's initial reaction was to say that photos could be doctored, she responded to Ambassador's concerns, concurred on dislike of use of violence and promised to follow up with the Interior Minister. An hour later the Minister for Foreign Affairs informed Ambassador that PM Greceanii had spoken with the Interior Minister and arranged for the Ambassador to be able to visit the places of detention and personally clarify circumstances. End Summary.

Ambassador Raises Torture Concerns with Prime Minister

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¶12. (C) In an April 14 meeting with Prime Minister Greceanii, Ambassador Chaudhry raised his concerns about harsh treatment of protestors who have been detained. The Ambassador spoke of his abhorrence of violence and said that we had seen evidence of very harsh treatment of those in prison, including photos of the individual who died in police custody.

3 (C) At first Prime Minister Greceanii noted that pictures can be manipulated, but then went on to suggest that the Ambassador also speak with the Interior Minister and Procurator General to find out more about what had been taking place. The Prime Minister said that she would speak to the Interior Minister and arrange for the Ambassador to meet with him. She noted that an Ombudsman had visited the places of detention and seen the prisoners, and said that it was necessary to clarify the situation as the opposition was spreading allegations of torture.

¶14. (C) The Ambassador noted that United Nation Resident Coordinator Kaarina Immonen had visited the detention center and issued a report after the visit, confirming mistreatment. She had reported that young men were being held 20-30 or even 40 to a small room with no food or water. She had seen bruises indicating the use of excessive violence. Additionally the EU Ambassadors met a couple of students after they were released and saw evidence of bruises on their bodies. The Prime Minister responded with the suggestion of visiting the policemen who were wounded and were in hospitals.

¶15. (C) The Ambassador noted that on the night of the April 7 demonstrations he had called for an end to violence, as all violence was wrong. Now he said he was suggesting that

harsh treatment of those in prison had to be stopped both for humanitarian reasons and because these events were creating an unnecessarily bad image of Moldova all over the world.

¶6. (C) The Prime Minister responded that she understood, and agreed that she too was opposed to any type of violence. Noting that she was disturbed by the Ambassador's reports, she said she would tell the Procurator General to pay attention to this problem and also promised to call the Minister of the Interior. The Ambassador left a file with photos of bruised bodies with the Prime Minister.

Foreign Minister Confirms Prison Access Arranged

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¶7. (C) An hour later at a meeting arranged to discuss a different issue, Foreign Minister Stratan followed up on the issue of the photos and the Ambassador's meeting with the Prime Minister. He said that PM Greceanii had already talked to the Minister of Interior and arranged that the Ambassador could have access to visit the places of detention and clarify the circumstances. The Ambassador underscored for the Foreign Minister that these photos were being circulated around the world, and were damaging Moldova's image.

Comment

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¶7. (C) Anyone who sees the photos of bruised bodies and the deceased 23-year old man's head wounds cannot fail to be

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totally revolted by the evidence of police brutality. Thanks to the internet, the photos are spreading like wildfire around Europe and the U.S. Opposition demands have shifted from discussions of electoral fraud to accusations of brutality and terror. Their hand is being strengthened by universal revulsion to the obvious proof of torture. It is now in everyone's interest to ensure that the detainees are not roughed up any further. As an intermediary who maintains good working relations with both the GOM and the opposition, the American Ambassador can play a positive role in assisting reconciliation during this difficult period of post-electoral crisis.

CHAUDHRY